



California Public Utilities Commission Fire Safety and Utility Infrastructure En Banc

January 31, 2018
9:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.

505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco
Webcast: www.adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc

Fire Safety and Utility Infrastructure

California's forest and rangeland vegetation grows in a Mediterranean climate with cool, moist winters and hot, dry summers. The combination of vegetation, climate, and topography creates a high risk fire environment. Every year, there are more than 5,400 wildland fires that burn an average of more than 156,000 acres each year. In many cases, fires impact utility infrastructure regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Utilities, especially electric and telecommunication services, are also critical for emergency response and the ability of first responders to communicate. However, in some instances utility infrastructure may also contribute to or be the cause of fire. As such, it is important for the CPUC to fully understand the intersect of fire safety and utility infrastructure. The purpose of this En Banc is to examine the fire threat in California and what steps can be taken to mitigate fire hazards to utility infrastructure.

NOTE: This En Banc is independent of any CPUC proceeding, and panelists are forbidden from making ex parte comments related to open proceedings during their presentations or discussions. No CPUC Decision will issue as a result of information shared in this En Banc.



9:15 - 9:30 a.m. **Welcome and Introductions (President Picker)**

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. **Panel 1: Fire Threat in California**

This panel will be focused on general fire risk and trends in the state. This will include a presentation from The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), and other experts. The focus will be to answer questions about the trends of fires (frequency of fire events) and associated risk factors (population density, new developments, climate change, drought, tree mortality, etc.). Roles of different state agencies will also be discussed. The overall goal of the panel is to understand the current state of fire risk in California before doing a deeper dive into issues that are more specific to CPUC-regulated entities.

10:30 – 10:40 a.m. **Break**

10:40 – 11 a.m. **Presentation: Overview of CPUC Actions**

A presentation by advisory staff summarizing major proceedings, focusing on scope and status. Proceedings will include the Fire Safety OIR, Pole Management OIR/OII, GO 95 Updates, and other relevant cases. Because the CPUC will be summarizing pending proceedings, this will be an information-only presentation with no discussion or audience questions solicited.

11 a.m. - Noon **Panel 2: National Standards and Best Practices**

This panel will look at best practices in reducing risks of fires from electric infrastructure, including vegetation management, protective device settings (reclosers), weather analytics, proactive de-energizing of lines, use of private firefighting crews, etc. Additionally, the CPUC will discuss national standards, such as the National Electric Safety Code and/or lessons learned from other states.

Noon – 1:30 p.m. **Lunch Break**

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. **Panel 3: Climate adaptation and infrastructure impacts**

More than 8 million people own homes and businesses in wildland areas and development at the wildland-urban interface continues to grow. As a result, fires that once burned as part of a natural process now threaten lives, property, and valuable resources. This panel will discuss how to best address new developments in high-fire areas and the investor-owned utilities' obligation to serve. This panel will also discuss how climate adaptation can be used a tool to mitigate against fire-related threats and events.

2:30 – 3:30 p.m. **Panel 4: Supporting Utility Customers in Emergencies**

This panel will address emergency response, with a specific focus on actions that Cal OES, CAL FIRE, and the CPUC take to support customers. The panel will discuss specific steps that can be taken, such as suspending disconnections, waving deposit requirements, and other measures.

3:30 – 4 p.m. **Wrap-up and Next Steps**

Commissioners, the CPUC's Executive Director, and select Division Directors discuss outcomes from the En Banc, identify next steps, and determine owners for action items.